CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

AirLand Battle doctrine has produced great changes in the Army. It has affected everything from equipment to the way we fight. Commanders need to understand these concepts and how they affect the employment of an infantry battalion. This chapter introduces AirLand Battle doctrine and explains its effect on battalion-level tactical doctrine.

Section I
THE ROLE OF THE INFANTRY BATTALION

The infantry battalion serves many roles on the airland battlefield. It engages most often in close battles and may conduct raids or stay-behind operations as part of deep operations. The battalion may participate in rear battle as part of a tactical combat force. Also, due to their rapid deployability by air, infantry units are ideally suited for executing strategic contingency plans and establishing lodgements. Limited visibility is the basis for infantry battalion operations. It is the environmental condition that the US military seeks to take advantage of its technology and training. Darkness, fog, heavy rain, and falling snow all limit visibility. A combination of technical ability (afforded by NVDs) and tactical prowess (afforded by training) allows the infantry battalion to operate routinely during these conditions. Limited visibility operations strike the defender when the range of his weapons and the mutual support between his positions are reduced.

1-1. THE AIRLAND BATTLE

Infantry forces can operate effectively in low-intensity, mid-intensity, or high-intensity conflict and in most terrain and weather conditions.

a. Infantry may dominate in low-intensity conflicts due to its rapid strategic deployability and its ability to meet the enemy on equal terms.

b. Mid-intensity to high-intensity conflicts may be chaotic, intense, and destructive. Such operations rarely maintain a linear character. The speed with which forces can concentrate and the high volumes of supporting fires they can bring to bear make the mixing of opposing forces almost inevitable.

c. The AirLand Battle is the doctrinal basis for meeting these challenges. It involves maneuver at all levels and tries to use the full potential of US forces. It is offensively oriented so commanders may go to the offense as soon as possible. No matter what level the conflict, the side that keeps the initiative through offensive action forces the other side to react rather than to act. The thrust of AirLand Battle doctrine is to disrupt the enemy's synchronization, preventing him from applying combat power at a decisive point; and to create opportunities for US forces to destroy his force.

1-2. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE AIRLAND BATTLE

FM 100-5 states that success on the modern battlefield depends on commanders at all levels understanding and implementing the basic tenets

of AirLand Battle doctrine: *initiative, depth, agility,* and *synchronization.*

a. **Initiative.** This is the ability to set or change the terms of battle through action. It requires commanders to maintain an offensive spirit. It means that, when an opportunity presents itself, the commanders may depart from planned actions to hasten mission accomplishment. To do this without jeopardizing the higher plan requires that the commander understand and work within the intent of the commander two levels up. This implies a degree of independence and risk. Commanders translate their initiative into action by issuing mission-type orders. These orders in turn give subordinate commanders the flexibility, within the scope of their commander's intent, to improvise and act aggressively to accomplish assigned missions and defeatt the enemy. In addition to understanding the scope of their commander's intent, each leader must understand his unit's part in the commander's concept (as the main or a supporting effort), so that he may confidently and boldly exploit success.

b. **Depth.** This is measured in time, distance, and resources. At battalion level, depth is achieved by positioning forces to deny the enemy the ability to maintain mass, momentum, and mutual support. The battlefield is no longer a one-dimensional or two-dimensional entity. The commander must understand how he and the enemy fit into the higher commander's deep, close, and rear battles. When possible, reserves are employed. This gives depth to the battalion and provides the commander with a form to counterattack and completely destroy the enemy.

c. **Agility.** This is the ability to think and act faster than the enemy. It involves mental, command and control, and organizational abilities to adjust rapidly and to use the situation, terrain, and weather to defeat the enemy. The plan must be simple, yet flexible enough that the commander can react when an opportunity presents itself.

(1) Mobility, flexibility of task organization, timely intelligence, and rapid decision-making enable the commander to cause the enemy to react, which sets the terms of the battle. At the battalion level, these terms are often simplified by positioning the command group well forward so they can see the battlefield, recognize opportunities, and rapidly seize the initiative. The commander and his subordinates rely on IPB, a sound R&S plan, and accurate reports to quickly understand enemy intentions.

(2) Reaction time is reduced by rehearsing SOPs and drills, by choosing sound initial positions for dismounted units that simplify their ability to maneuver. Assets from CS and CSS are positioned to sustain the main effort and to provide flexibility to the plan. *Complexity reduces agility.*

d. **Synchronization.** This is the arrangement of battlefield activities in time, space, and purpose to produce the greatest possible relative combat power at the decisive point. Synchronization is both a process and a result.

(1) Synchronization extends from planning the maneuver to integrating CS and CSS assets to ensure mission accomplishment.

(2) Leaders at all levels must understand friendly and enemy capabilities. They must know how to relate these capabilities to time and space to produce synchronized plans that satisfy the commander's intent.

(3) Synchronization begins in the mind of the commander with his concept of operations. The concept must clearly focus the main effort at a decisive point and must clearly designate the effects (tasks and purposes) of the subordinates. Understanding and using a common doctrine and military language enhances synchronization.

(4) The commander creates synchronization by developing, issuing, and rehearsing clear, succinct orders supplemented by well-established SOPs. Using SOPs enables the commander to rapidly employ assets and to seize tactical opportunities without lengthy explanations and orders.

1-3. COMBAT POWER

Combat power is the ability to fight. It is relative, not absolute, because it has meaning only as compared to the combat power the enemy can generate. Combat power includes the numbers of weapons systems and soldiers; the unit's state of training, cohesion, discipline, and morale; and the leader's and soldiers' tenacity, competence, and boldness. It measures the *effect* created by combining maneuver, firepower, protection, and leadership in combat actions against an enemy. Friendly combat power is *relative* to that of enemy forces committed at the point of decision;

therefore, any actions taken to degrade enemy firepower, protection, maneuver, and leadership increase friendly relative combat power.

a. **Maneuver.** This is the movement of forces, relative to the enemy, to secure or retain a positional advantage. Combat units must maneuver to win. Unit commanders boldly maneuver their forces at the critical times and places to attack enemy weaknesses, gain favorable positioning, and exploit success. The effects of maneuver may also be achieved without movement of friendly forces by allowing the enemy to move into a bad position such as into an ambush or a stay-behind operation.

b. **Firepower.** This is the intelligent use of direct and indirect fires (FA, mortars, and CAS), as well as other combat multipliers (ADA, EW, AHs, and engineers) to support the scheme of maneuver. Firepower provides the destructive force vital to realizing the effects of maneuver. To be effective, firepower must be distributed and controlled at the critical time and place. Soldiers should be committed only when firepower alone is insufficient to accomplish the mission.

c. **Protection.** This is preserving the unit's fighting potential so it can be applied at the decisive time and place. Protection has two components. The first includes all actions taken to make the friendly unit hard to find or destroy. These actions include security, camouflage, deception, suppression, and mobility. The second component includes all actions taken to keep soldiers healthy and maintain their fighting morale, and to diminish the impact of severe weather. Safety is a key element of protection. Leaders must instill an awareness of individual safety in all subordinate leaders and soldiers. Soldiers must be constantly alert for and avoid situations that may result in injury or death. Also, leaders must verify the soundness of all tactical operations to prevent fratricide. This includes using appropriate control measures, conducting rehearsals, and ensuring soldiers understand the rules of engagement.

d. **Leadership.** This is the component on which all others depend. The main purpose of leadership in battle is to inspire and motivate soldiers to perform difficult tasks under trying circumstances. Before the battle, only capability or combat potential exists. However, a skillful leader, using the right combination of maneuver, firepower, and protection within a sound operational plan, can turn combat *potential* into real combat *power*. Confident, competent leaders are needed at all levels to train, discipline, and motivate units to achieve superior combat power. Leaders must set the example in all areas. In battle, they must lead their units from the front.

1-4. MISSION

The fundamental combat mission of the infantry battalion, regardless of the type of battalion, is to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver to destroy or capture him or to repel his assaults by fire, close combat, and counterattack. To accomplish specific missions and conduct sustained operations, the battalion is normally augmented by additional combat, CS, and CSS assets.

Section II
OPERATING SYSTEMS

Battalion functions are grouped into seven battlefield operating systems (BOSs). These systems must be integrated to support the commander's concept of the operation. The functioning of each operating system requires all elements of the battalion to coordinate their efforts. Each battle staff officer (for example, the FSO, signal officer, and engineer officer) must ensure that his area of responsibility is integrated into the overall battalion plan. The commander and staff integrate these BOSs into a combined arms force tailored to the situation. BOSs should be used as a planning tool, not as a framework for execution or issuing orders.

1-5. INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM

All units must report information obtained in the normal course of operations. The battalion's few dedicated, organic information-gathering assets include the scout platoon, infantry patrols, and PEWS. The artillery FSE may also contribute by passing targeting information to the S2. IPW teams, GSR, LLVI, CI team, and REMS teams may support the battalion from the divisional MI battalion. The maneuver battalion must obtain other timely intelligence from brigade. The S2 is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about the enemy and the area of interest. The S2 also prepares the collection plan designed to support the staff-developed decision-support template.

1-6. MANEUVER SYSTEM

The combat elements of the battalion provide the means to destroy enemy forces, seize and retain terrain, and secure other forces. All other assets support the maneuver elements.

a. The rifle company is the basic maneuver element of the battalion. It can close with and destroy enemy infantry. When properly employed, it can defeat enemy armored vehicles from close ranges. Organic TOW systems provide the battalion with a long-range antiarmor capability. The infantry is most effective when visibility, observation, and fields of fire are limited; and when it must fight in close combat.

b. Tanks (when supporting) are most effective where they can move fast and provide rapid, accurate, direct fire. Thermal sights permit them to fight during limited visibility almost as well as in good visibility.

c. Helicopters, when combined with infantry to form an air assault task force, are a valuable maneuver asset. Aviation units are normally under OPCON of the brigade. Attack helicopters may also maneuver against the enemy and are most effective against enemy armored formations.

1-7. FIRE SUPPORT SYSTEM

The commander may receive fire support beyond organic mortars in the form of FA, CAS, and NGF. All maneuver battalions have FSEs and FISTs attached from the direct-support FA battalion. The FSO helps the commander plan and coordinate fire support assets.

1-8. MOBILITY/COUNTERMOBILITY/ SURVIVABILITY SYSTEM

Infantry units should be trained and prepared to execute mobility/countermobility/survivability missions with or without engineer support. Combat engineers may augment the battalion, providing expertise, equipment, and limited manpower. The senior engineer unit leader advises the battalion commander on employing his engineer assets. With or without augmentation, the battalion constructs obstacles, emplaces and clears minefield, prepares demolitions, improves roads, provides bridging, and digs fighting positions.

1-9. AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM

The infantry battalion has no organic, dedicated, air defense weapons. It may be supported by a Stinger section, a Vulcan platoon, or both from the divisional ADA battalion. However, the infantry battalion's main air defense asset is a passive measure: remaining undetected. Other protective measures include moving during limited visibility and adverse weather conditions, and using effective camouflage techniques. If necessary, the battalion can use organic direct-fire systems to defend itself from air attack.

1-10. COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT SYSTEM

Infantry battalions have an austere CSS structure. Battalions may operate in restrictive terrain with few access roads. Weapons systems must be fueled, repaired, armed, and manned as near the battle area as tactically feasible. Supplies must be delivered as close to the user as possible. The S1, S4, medical officer, support platoon leader, and maintenance officer supervise the CSS system under the supervision of the XO.

1-11. COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM

Command is a personalized function in which the commander controls the battlefield interaction of his units and weapons with the terrain and enemy. The battalion commander controls by being on the battlefield where he can see, feel, and command the battle. He fights forward and issues orders as needed, orally and face-to-face when possible. His subordinate commanders and soldiers must know he is on the battlefield.

He must be proficient and confident, and must lead by example. This is possible when he gives subordinate leaders mission-type orders and allows them—within the scope of his intent—to exercise initiative. The efforts of the battalion must be synchronized.